Leader(ship) Identity Development and Meaning Making: A Scoping Review

Abstract

Despite a growing body of scholarship on leader and leadership (i.e., leader[ship]) identity development (LID), there has been surprisingly little systematic attention devoted to the connection between LID and meaning making, which is notable because meaning making has been regarded as foundational to the LID process. Accordingly, the current scoping review explores the scholarship and key characteristics at the intersection of LID and meaning making. Specifically, the year of publication, research method and design, country of participants, and theories central to author justification are analyzed. After sharing the results, contributions and implications for the constructs of LID and meaning making are outlined, with attention given to theoretical and methodological areas for future research. Finally, an integrated constructivist model of LID is proposed that urges leadership scholars and practitioners to incorporate developmental, identity, learning, and meaning making theories into their discussions of LID.

Keywords: leadership identity development, leader identity development, meaning making, sense making, scoping review

Introduction

Leader(ship) identity, "how one thinks of oneself as a leader" (Day & Harrison, 2007), has been increasingly recognized as critical to the development of leaders (Day & Dragoni, 2015; Day & Harrison, 2007; Kragt & Day, 2020; Lord & Hall, 2005; Miscenko et al., 2017). Lord and Hall (2005) noted that for interest and investment in leadership to be sustained, leadership work must be assimilated into one's self-identity. In other words, a person must establish and build a leader identity to be motivated to engage in continued leadership endeavors.

Within the leader(ship) identity field, numerous frameworks exist that highlight different aspects of the theory. For example, Lord and Hall's (2005) model of leadership skill emphasized leader self-identity because leader self-identity (a) is the structure around which people organize knowledge, (b) provides motivation and direction to move towards or away from leadership experiences, and (c) is a valuable lens through which leaders understand and motivate followers. Focusing on leadership identity development rather than leader self-identity, DeRue and Ashford (2010) described leadership identity construction as a process of claiming and granting leader and follower identities that occurs through social interactions. While some individuals internalize the role of leader through the claiming and granting process, others internalize the role of follower.

Although the phrases leader identity (or leader self-identity) and leadership identity have often been used interchangeably, several seminal works have distinguished between the two terms (Day, 2000; DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Miscenko et al., 2017). Leader identity is how one thinks of oneself as a leader, established through a personal narrative that creates meaning over time (Day & Harrison, 2007; Miscenko et al., 2017). Leadership identity, however, is described as a dynamic process of shifting identities in response to social interactions, emphasizing the relational influence of leadership roles and collective endorsement of leadership activity on leadership identity (Day, 2000; DeRue & Ashford, 2010). The current study investigated the connection between meaning making and all forms of leader and leadership identity development. Therefore, the term "leader(ship) identity development" (LID) is utilized throughout the paper to represent the inclusion of both leader and leadership identity development.

Occurring within the context of experiences, relationships, and interactions, LID has been discussed as an outcome of engaging in meaning making. Meaning making is defined as the process by which people understand and come to terms with experiences (Hammond et al., 2017; Lord & Hall, 2005; Zaar et al., 2020). Zaar et al. (2020) stated that leader identity is rooted in meaning making. Zheng and Muir (2015) noted that leader identity development is a process of meaning construction that involves numerous contextual factors. Further, Chung and Personette (2019) discussed meaning making, specifically reflection opportunities, as necessary to the LID process. Additionally, changes in meaning making structures have also been attributed to LID (Day & Dragoni, 2015; Miscenko et al., 2017). In sum, leader(ship) identity and meaning making have been connected in that (a) LID is a result of engaging in meaning making, and (b) LID is a catalyst for developing enhanced meaning making structures.

Despite the frequently cited importance of LID within the field of leader(ship) identity and the discussed connection between LID and meaning making, there has yet to be a structured review of literature at the intersection of LID and meaning making. Notably, publications at the intersection of leader(ship) identity and meaning making have increased dramatically in the past decade (see Figure 1), indicating the relevancy of conducting a scoping review. Previous reviews have been adjacent to the current topics (e.g., emerging leadership [Cox et al., 2022]; leader and leadership development [Day et al., 2014]; leadership and followership identity processes [Epitropaki et al., 2017]). Notably, the findings of a bibliometric review of the leadership development field conducted by Vogel et al. (2021) emphasized that lingering questions remain related to leadership development initiatives, leader identity, and shared leadership capabilities, such as sense making. Therefore, the objectives of the current scoping review were to (a) explore the literature at the intersection of LID and meaning making and (b) identify key characteristics

(e.g., theories and methods) related to the intersection of LID and meaning making. The purpose of the review is to contribute to increased clarity around the role of meaning making in LID, identify knowledge gaps in the field, articulate specific implications for scholars and practitioners, and provide future research directions.

Methods

Scoping Review

The current study utilized scoping review methodology (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Munn et al., 2018). The purpose of a scoping review is to articulate the key concepts of a specific research area (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Scoping reviews are beneficial when the topic is complex or has not been comprehensively reviewed, which are true of the current topic. Munn et al. (2018) shared that scoping methodology is appropriate to utilize when the purpose of the study is to (a) identify the types of evidence in a field, (b) illuminate central concepts, (c) examine how research has been conducted, (d) identify essential characteristics of the concepts, (e) act as a precursor to a systematic review, and (f) find knowledge gaps. Scoping review methodology was appropriate because the current study sought to examine how research has been conducted, ascertain key characteristics of the concepts, and identify gaps in the knowledge base, specifically at the intersection of meaning making and LID.

Identification of Sources

Following the recommendations of Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and Munn et al. (2018), sources were identified by conducting a search process with four search strings and no date-range limitations. Search phrases were a combination of four terms (["leadership identity development" AND "meaning making"], ["leadership identity development" AND "sense making"], ["leader identity development" AND "meaning making"], and ["leader identity

development" AND "sense making"]). Searches were run between December 27, 2020, and January 8, 2021, on Google Scholar and EBSCO Academic Search Premier (ASP). Google Scholar covers a breadth of scholarly work, and ASP returns more scholarly chapters than other academic databases (Vinson & Welsh, 2014). The searches looked for search terms anywhere in the text. The original search yielded 119 articles. After removing duplicate articles and non-peer-reviewed content, 100 articles were included in the current scoping review. The identification of sources and data analysis, including coding, was piloted in a 13-article scoping review featuring chapters from New Directions for Student Leadership.

Data Analysis

A two-person research team, one leadership faculty member and one advanced doctoral student, examined the articles. First, the articles were read, analyzed, and coded independently. Codes were compiled in an Excel file containing the article's (a) title, (b) author, (c) year published, (d) participants' country, (e) design, (f) population, (g) range in age and gender, (h) knowledge contribution, (i) central developmental theories, (j) central learning theories, (k) central leadership theories, (l) central identity theories, (m) LID theories, (n) meaning making theories, (o) process of meaning making (e.g., mentoring), (p) LID process of meaning making, and (q) research codes: (1) "LID" in general; (2) "meaning making" in general; (3) importance of LID; (4) importance of meaning making; and (5) explicit connection between LID and meaning making. Six meetings were held to review coding. Peer debriefing was used to establish the validity of coding by consensus. In line with Ary et al. (2014), consensus validity was defined as agreement among skills individuals that "description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics" (p. 532) are accurate.

Results

The analysis revealed that, of the 100 articles examined, the majority were published in education (43%), leadership (27%), management/business (17%), and psychology (6%) journals (see Table 1).

Table 1

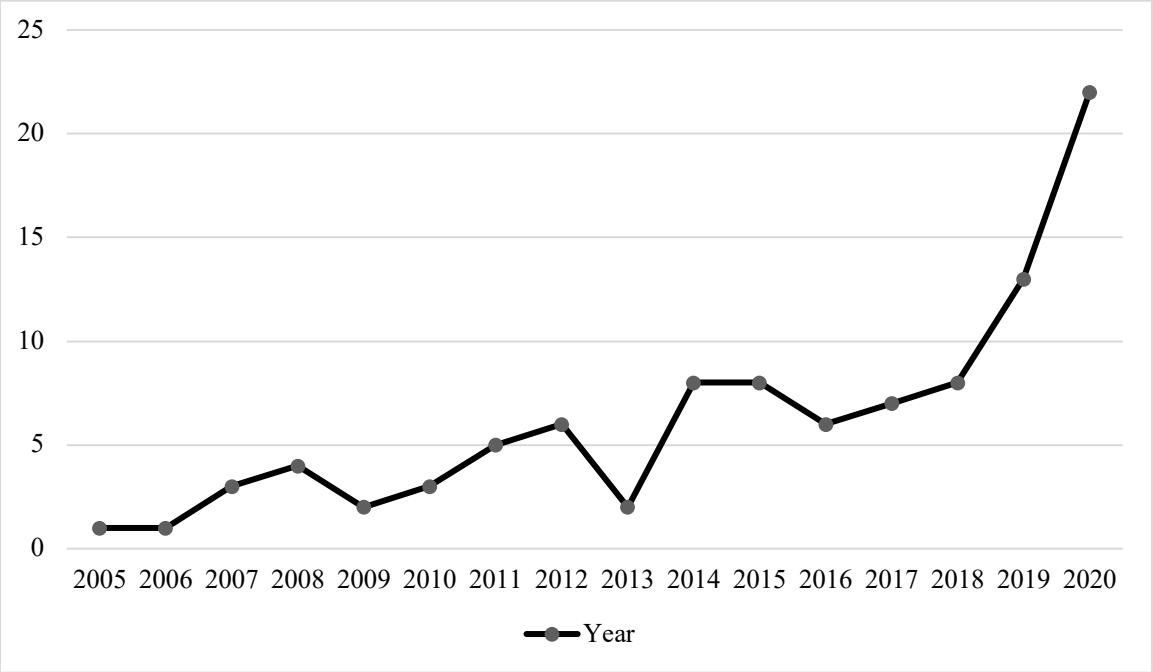
Frequency of Articles by Journal Category

Category	Number	Percentage	Journal with Most Articles
Education	43	43%	Journal of College Student Development
Leadership	27	27%	Journal of Leadership Education
Management/Business	17	17%	Human Resource Development Review
Psychology	6	6%	Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior
Interdisciplinary/Other	7	7%	Philosophy of Coaching: An International Journal

While time restraints were not placed on the search terms, the first article in the current scoping review was published in 2005, and over half (52%) were published from 2017 to 2020 (see Figure 1). One article was published at the beginning of 2021 and is included in the scoping review but not in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Year of Publication for the 100 Articles Reviewed



Participant Location

In total, 69 articles included the location of their participants. Two articles had populations from multiple countries, which resulted in a frequency of 74 countries throughout the 69 articles (see Table 2). The largest share of articles had participants in North America (80%), specifically the United States of America (75%). Other participant locations included Europe (11%), Asia (7%), and Oceania/Australia (5%).

The population of participants among the articles in the scoping review were also analyzed as WEIRD or non-WEIRD (i.e., Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic societies; Henrich et al., 2010). Utilizing Hendriks et al.'s (2019) criteria, of the 69 articles that included the location of their participants, five (7%) articles included participants from non-WEIRD societies (i.e., Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Singapore, Turkey, and Mexico). One paper featured participants from three WEIRD countries (i.e., Australia, the United Kingdom,

and the United States of America) and two non-WEIRD countries (i.e., India and Singapore). Another paper had participants from one WEIRD country (i.e., United States of America) and one non-WEIRD country (i.e., Mexico). In sum, 93% of articles had only participants from WEIRD societies (i.e., WEIRD; Henrich et al., 2010). The WEIRD acronym illustrates that while most behavioral science research comes from societies that are Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (i.e., by one estimate, 96% of behavioral science research), WEIRD countries hold just 12% of the world's population (Arnett, 2008).

Table 2

Frequency of Articles by Country of Participants

Category	Number	Percentage
North America	57	77%
United States of America	55	
Canada	1	
Mexico	1	
Europe	8	11%
Ireland	2	
Sweden	2	
United Kingdom	2	
Netherlands	1	
Northern-European	1	
Asia	5	7%
Hong Kong	1	
India	1	
Indonesia	1	
Singapore	1	
Turkey	1	
Oceania and Australia	4	5%
Australia	3	
New Zealand	1	

Note. Two articles had populations from multiple countries.

Study Design and Methodology

Turning to study design and methodology (see Table 3), most articles in the scoping review utilized qualitative methodology (51%). Others utilized conceptual (19%), quantitative (16%), practice (5%), mixed methods (5%), and review (4%) designs. Within the articles that employed qualitative methodology (see Table 4), case study was the most widely used (37%), followed by phenomenology (34%) and grounded theory (14%). The remaining articles (12%) did not discuss a specific qualitative methodology.

Table 3

Frequency of Articles by Design

Category	Number	Percentage
Qualitative	51	51%
Conceptual	19	19%
Quantitative	16	16%
Practice	5	5%
Mixed Methods	5	5%
Review	4	4%

Table 4

Frequency of Qualitative Articles by Method

Category	Number	Percentage
Case Study	19	37%
Phenomenology	12	24%
Grounded Theory	7	14%
Content/Discourse Analysis	3	6%
Narrative Inquiry	2	4%
Ethnography	2	4%
Other	6	12%

The 16 quantitative articles employed a variety of data collection and data analysis methods. Data collection methods (see Table 5) included self-report cross-sectional survey

(71%), self-report longitudinal survey (24%), and external sources (6%). Notably, only one quantitative study collected multiple forms of data (i.e., external sources and self-report longitudinal survey data). Quantitative data analysis methods (see Table 6) included modeling (e.g., structural equation modeling; 33%), regression (e.g., hierarchical multiple regression; 25%), and correlation (e.g., two-way ANOVAs; 17%). Markedly, seven of the 16 quantitative studies used data from the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL), an international research program seeking to understand the influences of higher education on socially responsible leadership and additional leadership outcomes (SoundRocket, 2021).

Table 5

Frequency of Quantitative Articles by Data Collection Method

Category	Number	Percentage
Self-Report Cross-Sectional Survey	12	71%
Self-Report Longitudinal Survey	4	24%
External Sources (i.e., promotion records)	1	6%

Note. One study used multiple data collection strategies (i.e., external sources and self-report longitudinal survey).

Coding Findings and Observations

Articles were specifically coded for themes related LID and meaning making. In total, 207 codes were applied across 81 articles. Nineteen articles had no applicable codes. The following codes were present: (1) “LID in general” was coded for in the majority of articles (56%), (2) “meaning making in general” was coded for in 42 articles (42%), (3) “importance of LID” was coded for in 42 articles (42%), and (4) “importance of meaning making” was coded for in 31 articles (31%). Notably, in a scoping review centered on LID and meaning making, the fifth code, “explicit connection between LID and meaning making,” was only coded for in 36 articles (36%). Sixty-four articles included multiple codes, with codes 1 and 3 being applied the

most (n = 15, 23%) and codes 1, 3, and 5 being coded next most often (n = 10, 16%). Three other groupings of codes were seen eight times each, including articles coded only 1; articles coded 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5; and articles coded 2 and 4.

Table 6

Frequency of Quantitative Articles by Data Analysis Method

Category	Number	Percentage
Modeling	8	33%
Structural Equation Modeling	2	
Hierarchical Linear Modeling	2	
Latent Growth Curve Modeling	1	
Confirmatory Factor Analysis	1	
K-Means Cluster Analysis	1	
Latent Profile Analysis	1	
Regression	6	25%
Hierarchical Multiple Regression	2	
Modified Hierarchical Regression	1	
Linear Regression	1	
Ordinary Least Squares Regression	1	
Hierarchical Ordinary Least Squares Regression	1	
Correlation	4	17%
Two-way ANOVAs	1	
MANOVAs	1	
Independent Samples t Test	3	13%
Descriptive Statistics	2	8%
Maximum Difference Scaling Importance Analysis	1	
Chi-Square Tests of Independence	1	4%

Note. Six studies used multiple data analysis strategies (e.g., Independent Samples t Test and Modified Hierarchical Regression).

Several observations were evident after analyzing the codes. First, while 40 articles specifically discussed meaning making practices that could potentially develop leader(ship) identity, only some of the 40 articles provided an explicit connection between LID and meaning

making. The most frequently cited practices were as follows: (a) reflection (cited ten times; self-reflection cited an additional four times; critical reflection cited an additional five times); (b) activating events (cited five times); (c) support from others (cited four times); and (d) adult and peer influences (cited three times).

Second, among the articles coded for "(5) explicit connection between LID and meaning making," there was a breadth of theories and methods. For example, Muir (2014) conducted a case study among leaders and mentors in a formal mentoring program, examining the influence of mentoring on participant LID and articulating a clear connection between LID and meaning making experiences, such as mentoring. McCain and Matkin (2019) wrote a conceptual article that applied a narrative framework, Communicated Narrative Sense making, to LID. Ryan et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative case study among women in Irish healthcare, using peer discussions and critical incident diaries to understand women's risk in claiming a leader identity.

LID Theories

Building upon the second observation, the third observation centers on LID theories. There were 13 total leader(ship) identity theories across 55 articles (see Table 7). Among the LID theories cited, the most frequent were the leadership identity development model from Komives et al. (2005, 2006, 2009), DeRue and Ashford's theory of co-constructed leadership identity (2010), and Lord and Hall's theory of leadership development (2005). The work of Komives et al. (2005, 2006, 2009) was centrally referenced in 39 different journals across 13 different disciplines, with 56% of the references appearing in leadership (29%), college student development (15%), or student affairs journals (12%). Following Komives et al. (2005, 2006, 2009), the next three most cited LID theories and models (i.e., Lord and Hall [2005], DeRue and Ashford [2010], and Day and Harrison [2007]) were centrally referenced in only 18 journals in

total across seven disciplines, with 73% of those citations occurring in leadership (28%), management (28%), or HR (17%) journals. The dispersion of LID theories across journals suggests that despite the small sample size of the original study, Komives et al. (2005, 2006, 2009) remain one of the most influential LID models, especially when considering the leadership development of college students. Other LID theories and models, notably the works of Lord and Hall (2005), Day and Harrison (2007), and DeRue and Ashford (2010), are more prominent in areas related to management and human resources.

Table 7

Leadership Identity Development (LID) Theories Central to Author Justification

Theory or Model Cited	#	Source Articles		
LID model: Komives et al., 2005, 2006, 2009; Komives & Dugan, 2014;	41	Acosta & Guthrie, 2021; Arnold & Crawford, 2014; Blaney, 2020; Boettcher & Gansemer-Topf, 2015; Brooks et al., 2019; Campbell et al., 2012; Day & Dragoni, 2015; Deer & Simpson, 2020; Dugan, 2006; Dugan & Yurman, 2011; Dugan et al., 2013; Dugan et al., 2014; Edwards, 2006;	Goodwin, 2020; Gott, 2019;Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2015; Hoover, 2009; Katsioloudes & Cannonier, 2019; Kjellström et al., 2020; Komives et al., 2009; Leigh et al., 2021; Mackoff et al., 2017; Manning-Ouellette et al., 2018; McCain & Matkin, 2019; Miller & Vaccaro, 2016; Minthorn, 2014; Muir, 2014;	Nilson et al., 2016; Nolan-Arañez & Ludvik, 2018; Onorato & Musoba, 2015; Renn, 2007; Shah et al., 2018; Sinha & Hanuscin, 2017; Spralls III et al., 2010; Spratley, 2020; Taştan & Davoudi, 2019; Tillapaugh & Haber-Curran, 2016; Workman et al., 2020; Young et al., 2011; Zaar et al., 2020; Zheng & Muir, 2015;
Leadership identity and skill development: Lord & Hall, 2005;	11	Day & Dragoni, 2015; Day & Harrison, 2007; Hammond et al., 2017; Kjellström et al., 2020;	McCain & Matkin, 2019; Miscenko et al., 2017;Muir, 2014; Kjellström et al., 2020; Shah et al., 2018;	Vogel et al., 2021; Zaar et al., 2020; Zheng & Muir, 2015;
Co-construction of leader identity: DeRue & Ashford, 2010;	11	Atewologun et al., 2017; Day & Dragoni, 2015; Goodwin, 2020; Hammond et al., 2017;	Humphreys et al., 2015; Lord et al., 2020; Mackoff et al., 2017; Ryan et al., 2020;	Skinner, 2020a; Vogel et al., 2021; Zaar et al., 2020;
Integrative theory: Day & Harrison, 2007; Day & Sin, 2011;	9	Atewologun et al., 2017; Day & Dragoni, 2015; Hammond et al., 2017;	Miscenko et al., 2017; Muir, 2014; Ryan et al., 2020;	Vogel et al., 2021; Zaar et al., 2020; Zheng & Muir, 2015;

Identity theory of leader-follower interactions: Lührmann & Eberl, 2007;	4	Muir, 2014; Shah et al., 2018;	Turner, 2019;	Zheng & Muir, 2015;

Note: Three theories were cited twice: Leadership development and growth (Day & Lance, 2014); Leader identity formation theory (Skinner 2014, 2020a, 2020b); Four dimensions of leader identity (Hammond et al., 2017). Several theories were cited at least once: Multi-faceted model of leader identity development (Zheng & Muir, 2015); Capacious model of leadership identity construction (Egan et al., 2017); Social identity theory of leadership (Hogg, 2001); Identity transition for leadership development (Ibarra et al., 2010); Leader identity and behavior (Johnson et al., 2012)

Meaning Making Theories

Fourth, there were 30 total meaning making theories across 34 articles (see Table 8). The most frequently discussed theories were Weick's (1995) work on sensemaking in organizations, Baxter Magolda's (1999, 2001, 2008, 2009 theory of self-authorship, Abes et al.'s (2007) model of multiple dimensions of identity (MMDI), 1's (1982) constructive developmental theory of adult development, Shamir and Eilam's (2005) life-story approach to authentic leadership, Drath and Palus' (1994) research on leadership as meaning making, Brown's (2015, 2017) writing on identity work, and Schon's (1983, 1993) research on reflective practice and metaphor for meaning making.

Thirty-six articles specifically discussed processes of meaning making, with the most frequently cited processes including (a) working with others (cited 11 times; e.g., shared reflective practices, peer support, and group discussion); (b) reflection (cited nine times; critical reflection cited an additional five times); (c) narratives and storytelling (cited five times); and (d) mentoring (cited three times). Other meaning making processes included artmaking, critical incident diaries, and leadership strengths training. Notably, although Kegan's (1980, 1982) model was only utilized as a central reference in two articles, the model was influential in the development of the MMDI, theory of self-authorship, life-story approach to authentic leadership, leadership identity development theory and model, and leadership as meaning making approach.

Table 8

Meaning Making Theories Central to Author Justification

Theory or Model Cited	#	Source Articles
Sensemaking in organizations: primarily Weick, 1995; but also, Day & Lord, 1992; Eden & Leviatan, 1975; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015;	4	Allen et al., 2012; Hammond et al., 2017; Lord et al., 2020; Randel et al., 2021;
Model of multiple dimensions of identity: Jones & McEwen, 2000; Abes & Jones, 2004; Abes et al., 2007;	3	Miller & Vaccaro, 2016; Patton & Simmons, 2008; Renn, 2007;
Theory of self-authorship: Baxter Magolda, 1999, 2001, 2008, 2009; Hodge et al., 2009;	3	Nolan-Arañez & Ludvik, 2018; Spratley, 2020; Workman et al., 2020;
Constructive-developmental theories of adult development: Kegan, 1982;	2	Helsing & Howell, 2014; Workman et al., 2020;
Life-story approach to authentic leadership: Shamir & Eilam, 2005;	2	Bush et al., 2019; Goodwin, 2020;
Leadership as meaning making: Drath & Palus, 1994;	2	Goodwin, 2020; Zaar et al., 2020;
Identity-work: primarily Brown, 2015, 2017; but also, Caza et al., 2018; Snow & Anderson, 1987; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003;	2	Hammond et al., 2017; Warhurst & Black, 2019;
Schon's work on reflective practice and metaphor for meaning making: Schön, 1983;	2	Arnold & Crawford, 2014; Kempster, 2006;

Note: Several theories were cited at least once: Queer authorship (Abes & Kasch, 2007); Morphogenetic approach (Archer, 1995, 2000); Cognitive schemas (From the review of Avolio et al., 2009; supported by work of Hodgkinson, 2003; Lord & Maher, 1993; Drath, 2001; Drath & Palus, 1994; Lord & Foti, 1986); Communication narrative sense making (Koenig Kellas & Kranstuber, 2015; Koenig Kellas, 2017); Family storytelling (Koenig Kallas, 2005); Narrative identity (McAdams, 1993); Constructivism (citing Baumgartner, 2001; Candy, 1991; Merriam et al., 2007; Vygotsky, 1978); Five perspectives on cognition (Fenwick, 2000; Lundgren et al., 2017); Reflective learning (Bourner, 2003); Reflective thought (Dewey, 1910); Identity formation (Wenger, 1998); Three categories of metacognition (Flavell, 1976, 1979, 2004); Metaphors (Jensen, 2006); Personal constructs psychology/theory (Kelly, 1955); Multidimensional matrix model (Day & O'Connor, 2003); Transformative learning theory phases of meaning making (Mezirow, 1991, 2000); Management narratives as meaning making (Robson, 2013); Artmaking as sense making (Eisner, 2002; Langer, 1953; Langer, 1972; Langer, 1982; Zwicky, 2003); Definition of "meaning" (Baumeister, 1991; Cote & Levine, 2002); Three facets of meaningfulness (Martela & Steger, 2016); Three modes of life narratives (Hänninen, 2004); Socially negotiated sensemaking in identity construction (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016); Phases of sensemaking in leader development across multiple domains (Hammond et al., 2017)

Developmental Theories

In addition to analyzing central LID and meaning making theories within the articles included in the scoping review, central developmental, learning, and identity theories were assessed. Of the theory categories studied, developmental models and theories were least utilized to justify the authors' central arguments. Twenty-six articles utilized 14 developmental models or theories to support authors' assertions (see Table 9). By far, the most influential development model was the constructive-developmental theories of adult development posited by Kegan (1980, 1982). Kegan, a constructive-developmental psychologist, posits that individuals progress through different stages of mental development with each stage using a unique lens to construct meaning. Kegan (1980) articulated that lens development allows for more complexity as individuals mature. Kegan's constructive-developmental theory of adult development was both a developmental theory and a model for meaning making; therefore, the model is listed in Tables 8 and 9. Kegan's work was one of the most heavily referenced of any non-leadership-related theory throughout the scoping review process and heavily influenced two other prominent development models that emerged in the scoping review results (i.e., Rooke and Torbert's [2005] constructive-development or ego development theory and Baxter Magolda's [1999, 2001] theory of self-authorship).

Table 9

Developmental Theories Central to Author Justification

Theory or Model Cited	#	Source Articles	
Constructive-developmental theories of adult development: Kegan, 1980, 1982;	9	Day & Harrison, 2007; Day & Dragoni, 2015; Edwards, 2006; Helsing & Howell, 2014;	Kjellström et al., 2020; Komives et al., 2009; Latta, 2019; Muir, 2014; Renn, 2007
Theory of student involvement: Astin, 1977, 1993;	4	Dugan, 2006 Dugan et al.,2008; Dugan & Komives, 2010; Hoover, 2009	
Theory of self-authorship: Baxter Magolda, 1999, 2001;	3	Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2015; Komives et al., 2009 Nolan-Arañez & Ludvik, 2018	
Seven vectors of college student identity development: Chickering and Reisser, 1993;	2	Bush et al., 2019; Prather et al., 2018	
College impact model: Astin, 1991;	2	Dugan et al., 2008; Dugan et al., 2013	
Model of student socialization: Weidman, 1989;	2	Blaney, 2020 Dugan et al., 2008	
Constructive-development or ego development theory: Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Torbert, 2004;	2	Day & Harrison, 2007 Kjellström et al., 2020	
Psychosocial development: Erikson, 1959; 1968;	2	Day & Harrison, 2007 Komives et al., 2009	
Constructive-developmental theories of adult development: Loevinger, 1996;	2	Day & Harrison, 2007 Helsing & Howell, 2014	

Note: Several theories were cited at least once: Theories of LGBTQ identity development (Renn, 2010; Renn & Bilodeau, 2005); Social perspective taking in the context of moral development theory (Hoffman, 2000; Kohlberg, 1976, 1984); Stages of cognitive development (Piaget, 1977); Emerging adulthood theory (Arnett, 2000, 2001); Dynamic skill theory (Fischer, 1980; Fischer & Bidell, 1998, 2006; Mascolo & Fischer, 2010)

Learning Theories

Learning models and theories were central to authors' arguments in 28 articles in the current scoping review. In total, 15 theories or models were cited (see Table 10). The most

frequently discussed were Kolb's (1983, 1984) experiential learning theory; Bandura (2001), Bandura and Walters (1977), and Bandura et al.'s (1999) prolific research on social learning theory, including the theory of self-efficacy, and self-regulatory theory; and Mezirow's (1991, 2000, 2009) work on transformative learning.

While similar, an essential distinction exists between learning and meaning making. According to Zittoun and Brinkmann (2012), learning theories address the process of acquiring understanding, abilities, or dispositions that allow the learner to behave, think, and feel in a manner regarded as beneficial by the learner or by others. Meaning making theories, however, describe how individuals understand circumstances, events, objects, or conversations considering their past interpretations and circumstances (Zittoun & Brinkmann, 2012). Although the terms meaning making and learning have often been used interchangeably, they are distinct processes in that meaning making theories focus on individual interpretation while learning theories focus on knowledge acquisition.

Of note for the current review, learning and meaning making are critical, closely related processes for LID. Candy (1991) suggested from a social constructionist perspective that learning encompasses two divergent views: (a) personal, where an individual makes meaning; and (b) social, where knowledge is mutually constructed through dialogue and interaction. Despite the clear connection between learning and meaning making, only half of the articles that centrally referenced a learning theory also referenced a meaning making theory. Although several articles referenced meaning making processes as part of the learning process, only nine articles that discussed meaning making processes and learning theories also employed a separate model for meaning making.

Table 10

Learning Theories Central to Author Justification

Theory or Model Cited	#	Source Articles	
Experiential learning: Kolb, 1983, 1984;	10	Deer & Simpson, 2020; Katsioloudes & Cannonier, 2019; Kempster, 2006; Kirchner, 2018; Komives et al., 2009;	Kragt & Day, 2020; Raffo, 2012; Spratley, 2020; White, 2012; Vogel et al., 2021;
Social learning theory: Bandura & Walters, 1977; Social cognitive theory and self-efficacy: Bandura, 1997; Wood & Bandura, 1989; Self-regulation theory: Bandura, 2001;	9	Dugan & Komives, 2010; Dugan et al., 2008; Dugan et al., 2013; Kempster, 2006;	Kirchner, 2018; Kragt & Day, 2020; Latta, 2019; Vogel et al., 2021; Warhurst & Black, 2019;
Transformative learning: Brooks, 2000; Mezirow, 1991, 2000, 2009;	6	Carver, 2016; Collay, 2014; Collay & Cooper, 2008;	Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2015; Workman et al., 2020; Young et al., 2011;
Reflective thinking in adult education: Dewey, 1910;	3	Deer & Simpson, 2020; Lundgren & Poell, 2016; White, 2012;	
Learning goal orientation: Dweck, 1986;	2	Hammond et al., 2017; Vogel et al., 2021	
Situated learning theory: Lave & Wenger, 1991;	2	Kempster, 2006; Warhurst & Black, 2019;	

Note: Several theories were cited at least once: Adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980); Metacognitive capacity building and metacognitive processes (Flavell, 1976, 1979, 2004; Miller, 2017); High-impact learning experiences (Kuh, 2008, 2010); Problem-based learning (Shepherd & Codsgriff, 1998); Leader and follower experiences as a source of transformation learning model (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018); Goal setting (Locke & Latham, 1990); Five perspectives on cognition that characterizing experiential learning (Fenwick, 2000); Action learning (Dotlich & Noel, 1998; Froiland, 1994; Marquardt, 2004; Pedler, 1997); Self authorship (Baxter Magolda, 1998)

Identity Theories

Identity models and theories were frequently cited throughout the current review. In all, 42 articles centrally referenced 26 different theories or models from identity literature (see Table 11). Ten theories or models were cited at least twice. The heterogeneous nature of identity theory

in the current review is not shocking. Many prominent scholars have noted the vast and varied nature of identity scholarship (Brown, 2017; Corlett et al., 2017). The most cited identity model was from the many works of Stryker and Burke (e.g., 2000) on role identity and identity salience, often referred to as, simply, identity theory. Identity theory centers on roles and role-taking, specifically the importance of roles to individuals and their social environments, as well as identity salience, which refers to the likelihood that a given identity activates across contexts (Morris, 2013). The other most referenced identity theory in the current review was the model of multiple dimensions of identity (MMDI) from Abes, Jones, and McEwan's (e.g., 2007) varied works. The MMDI is unique as both an identity model and a meaning making model. Although many identity theories address meaning making, especially identity theories focused on identity work, none integrate meaning making to the extent of the MMDI.

Table 11

Identity Theories Central to Author Justification

Identity Theory or Model Cited	#	Source Articles
Role identity theory (identity salience): Bratman, 1987; Burke, 2003; 2004; Gecas, 1982; Stets & Burke, 2000; Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Serpe, 1994;	8	Arquisola et al., 2019; Campbell et al., 2019; Jacobson & Paynter, 2019; Kragt & Day, 2020; Miscenko et al., 2017; Muir, 2014; Shah et al., 2018; Skinner, 2020b;
Model of multiple dimensions of identity: Abes & Jones, 2004; Abes et al., 2007; Jones & McEwen 2000;	7	Dugan & Yurman, 2011; Miller & Vaccaro, 2016; Patton, 2011; Patton & Simmons, 2008; Renn, 2007; Strayhorn et al., 2008; Tillapaugh & Haber-Curran, 2016;
Social identity theory: Tajfel, 1972, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1979;	4	Campbell et al., 2019; Lord et al., 2020; Shah et al., 2018; Workman et al., 2020;
Identity-work & regulation of work place identity: primarily Alvesson et al., 2008; Alvesson & Robertson, 2016; Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Brown, 2015, 2017; Brown & Toyoki, 2013; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; also: Caza et al., 2018; Ford et al., 2008; Sfard & Prusak, 2005; Watson, 2008;	4	Cooper, 2020; Goodwin, 2020; Miscenko et al., 2017; Warhurst & Black, 2019;
Individual, relational, and collective self-identity typologies: Lord & Brown, 2004; and several others including: Banaji & Prentice, 1994; Brewer & Gardener, 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Markus & Wurf, 1987;	4	Day & Harrison, 2007; Lord & Hall, 2005; Muir, 2014; Skinner, 2020b;
Stages of homosexual identity formation: Cass, 1979; Fassinger, 1998;	3	Ivory, 2012; Strayhorn, 2014; Strayhorn et al., 2008;
Life span model of sexual orientation identity development: D'Augelli, 1994;	3	Ivory, 2012; Renn, 2007; Strayhorn et al., 2008;

Social identity theory in organizations: Ashforth et al., 2008; Ashforth & Mael, 1989;	3	Cooper, 2020; Miscenko et al., 2017; Randel et al., 2021;

Note: One theory was cited twice: Society identity theory of leadership: Hogg, 2001; Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2033; Several theories were cited at least once: Identity control theory: Burke, 2006; Typology of non-heterosexual male collegiate identities: Dilley, 2005; Latino identity development model: Ferdman & Gallegos, 2001; Teacher identity theory: Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Self-perception theory: Bem, 1972; Social construction of identities: several authors including Evans et al., 2012; Jones & Stewart, 2016; Stewart & Brown, 2019; Stewart 2009, 2015; Identity development theory: Including narrative identity and symbolic interactionism: Ricoeur 1992; Possible selves: Markus & Nurius, 1986; Aspirational identity: Gergen, 1971, 1989; Notion of becoming: Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Native cultural identity: Horse, 2005; Typology of identity work: Gee 2001, 2003, 2005; Structure and agency in identity: Woodward, 2004; Narrative identity: Fisher, 1987; McAdams, 1993; McAdams & de St. Aubun, 1998; Identity formation within communities of practice: Wenger, 1998; Multidimensional identity model: Reynolds & Pope, 1991;

Notably, nearly all the most cited theories and models in the current scoping review articles came from a social constructionist perspective, which highlights the "constructed and constructing view of identity" (Alvesson & Robertson, 2018, p. 8-9). In a seminal review of identity scholarship, Brown (2015) suggested four epistemological approaches that encompassed identity theorizing, one of which was social cognition, otherwise regarded as social constructivism. Despite identity work having four overarching epistemological approaches, the articles in the current scoping review utilized a social constructionist perspective nearly exclusively.

Discussion

The current scoping review analyzed articles at the intersection of LID and meaning making. A structured online search produced 100 peer-reviewed articles, which were analyzed through a coding process. Specifically, the following attributes and aspects of the articles were examined: (a) journal and journal category; (b) year of publication; (c) location of participants; (d) research design; I research methodology (i.e., data collection and data analysis); and (f) theories central to author justification (i.e., LID, meaning making, developmental, learning, and identity theories). Notably, while time restrictions were not placed on the search, 52 of the 100

articles were published between 2017 and 2020, emphasizing the increasing interest in LID and meaning making. The demonstrated rise may be due to the popularity of the following articles: (a) Komives et al. (2005, 2006, 2009); (b) DeRue and Ashford (2010); and (c) Lord and Hall (2005).

The current review has numerous contributions and implications for scholars and practitioners. First, while authors are increasingly discussing meaning making processes and LID (see Figure 1), the results of the scoping review identified numerous gaps in the literature, particularly related to the reciprocal connection between LID and meaning making. Specifically, the literature gaps are illustrated in the following questions: (a) *What experiences are best suited to foster meaning making capacity and facilitate LID (e.g., structured, unstructured, co-curricular)?* (b) *What questions maximize meaningful reflection when engaging in meaning making to facilitate LID?* and (c) *What is the role of time in utilizing meaning making to facilitate LID (Vogel et al., 2021)?* For example, Deer and Simpson (2020) studied business leadership development occurring among students who walked 500 miles on the Camino de Santiago. Deer and Simpson (2020) recommended that instructors of similar experiences employ reflective learning pedagogy and be skilled in asking questions. However, practitioners are left wondering what questions elicited shifts in meaning making capacity among participants and why. It is essential that future leadership researchers explicitly articulate the meaning making experiences, contexts, and questions that facilitate LID so scholarship is conducted with enhanced depth and practitioners have clear guidelines for implementation.

Second, the current scoping review findings revealed gaps related to meaning making, specifically a lack of definitive theories and a need to map the meaning-making process, specifically related to LID. First, the results of the current scoping review did not reveal a

definitive article on meaning making, indicating that scholars draw from numerous sources and articles when conceptualizing and studying meaning making. To bring clarity to the field, future researchers are recommended to analyze meaning making scholarship and summarize similarities and differences, bringing enhanced consensus and clarity to the study of meaning making. Next, regarding a need to map the meaning-making process, there is a necessity to answer the following question: *What is the process of meaning making in LID, and how might that process occur differently based on level of analysis (e.g., individual, shared, collective; Weick, 1995)?* For example, as an individual's leader identity develops, how does the *process* of meaning making shift? Without mapping precise processes meaning making, the field will continue to lack conclusiveness, resulting in vague guidance for practitioners and leaving scholarship at risk of inaccurate interpretation. As meaning-making processes are mapped and understood at different levels of analysis, there may be additional opportunities for scholars to address the lack of measurement for meaning making. Considered holistically, meaning making and leader(ship) identity scholars are urged to discuss meaning making with enhanced theoretical grounding and specificity.

Third, the current results demonstrated a focus on meaning making as a contributor to LID. However, previous scholarship had, conversely, also discussed LID as catalyzing change in meaning making structures (Day & Dragoni, 2015; Miscenko et al., 2017). Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to examine the effect of LID on meaning making capacity, rather than just the effect of meaning making on LID, to articulate the bidirectional and interwoven connection between LID and meaning making. Ignoring the influence of LID on meaning making structures within leadership research threatens to minimize a notable portion of the connection between LID and meaning making.

Fourth, the current results elucidate a gap in the field regarding methodological approaches. Research at the intersection of LID and meaning making has been dominated by qualitative (51%) techniques, specifically case studies (37%) and phenomenology (24%). Notably, personal narratives have been marginally utilized (n = 2, 4%), despite personal narratives being regarded as an integral part of meaning making (Creamer et al., 2010). Narrative approaches may, for example, provide richer analyses of how LID development shapes meaning making structures. Further, only 5% of the studies in the current review used mixed methods approaches, despite the advantages mixed methods research traditions provide over qualitative or quantitative methodologies alone, such as contextualized data (Collay & Cooper, 2008).

Additionally, only four of the 16 quantitative studies utilized longitudinal data (24%), revealing a need for future research to study LID and meaning making longitudinally. Longitudinal research is critical in developmental research, such as LID scholarship, to understand change over time (Day et al., 2014). Finally, nearly half (n = 7) of the quantitative studies employed data from the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL). Future researchers are encouraged to utilize additional diverse, non-WEIRD samples to gain a broader understanding of LID and meaning making. In sum, future scholars are implored to study the intersection of meaning making and LID through a wide variety of methodologies, including narrative, mixed methods, and longitudinal approaches, as well as among non-WEIRD samples.

Fifth, the lack of obvious quantitative techniques for examining both meaning making and LID may be a primary reason for the dirth of mixed methods (5%) and quantitative (15%) approaches in the current scoping review. Scholars may consider using quantitative developmental assessments like the Career Decision Making Survey (Creamer et al., 2010), which measures levels of self-authorship, to develop meaning making categories that can be

utilized to analyze qualitative data. Other quantitative methods to be explored include degree of change graphing (Sunderman et al., 2022) and quantitative observation of leadership behavior. Additionally, given the increasing popularity of LID in the leadership literature, future scholars are urged to utilize LID theories to develop and validate scales. For example, as suggested by Hastings and Sunderman (2023), a scale developed from Komives et al.'s (2006) LID model, which has been extensively cited in the field of college student development (Mayhew et al., 2016), might focus on the individual transition from a position to a process-based view of leadership. It is also recommended that scholars create structures to guide the study and practice of meaning making.

Finally, the research on LID, meaning making, and the theories supporting LID and meaning making (i.e., developmental, identity, and learning theories), is dominated by constructivist psychological approaches. Psychological constructivism is an epistemology that believes individuals construct new understandings and knowledge through the interaction of previous experiences and new events. Constructivist psychological approaches share a perception of knowledge as interpretation and recognize interpretations as historically grounded rather than timeless, contextually supported rather than globally applicable, and socially developed rather than independently generated (Raskin, 2002). Understandably, nearly all the identity theories cited by the articles in the current scoping review used a social constructionist approach, a specific constructivist approach. Beyond identity theories, Kegan's (1980, 1982) theory of adult development, which was influential in the current review, and Kolb's (1983, 1984) work on experiential learning, based heavily on the writings of Dewey (1910) and Piaget (1977), employed constructivist approaches. The only theory cited with regularity in the current

review with an epistemology different from constructivism is Bandura's (2001) social cognitive approach, which adhered to behavioral and cognitive approaches.

While constructivist approaches dominated the theories and articles in the current review, psychological approaches beyond constructivism have been foundational to building leadership theories. For example, Judge et al. (2009) examined the bright and dark sides of leader traits using an evolutionary psychology theoretical framework. While psychological approaches underpin leadership theory, they often remain unacknowledged (Iszatt-White & Kempster, 2019; Judge et al., 2009; Kaiser et al., 2012; Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012). Given that the dominant view of LID considers it a social influence process, constructivist assumptions, although regularly unspoken, serve as the foundation for many LID theories and models. The current scoping review demonstrates that other modern approaches to psychology, including psychodynamic, biological, behavioral, cognitive, humanistic, evolutionary, and biopsychosocial, are underutilized in building LID theories. There is an opportunity to investigate LID beyond a constructivist epistemology by framing it within other psychological traditions. Not that this should diminish the relevance and importance of a constructivist approach; however, in utilizing additional epistemological approaches, researchers may uncover novel findings.

Within the constructivist context, the results of the current scoping review reveal that models of LID ought to be situated within an understanding of how individuals make meaning of experiences and acquire new knowledge, as well as also how cognitive development and perceptions of social identity influence the processes of meaning making and knowledge acquisition. In sum, the cross-section of LID and meaning making is also a cross-section of development, learning, and identity. Therefore, an integrated constructivist model for leader(ship) identity theories is proposed (see Figure 2). Notably, the title of the model includes

the word constructivist because most articles in the current scoping review utilized a constructivist epistemology; therefore, it may be errant to generalize the proposed model beyond constructivism.

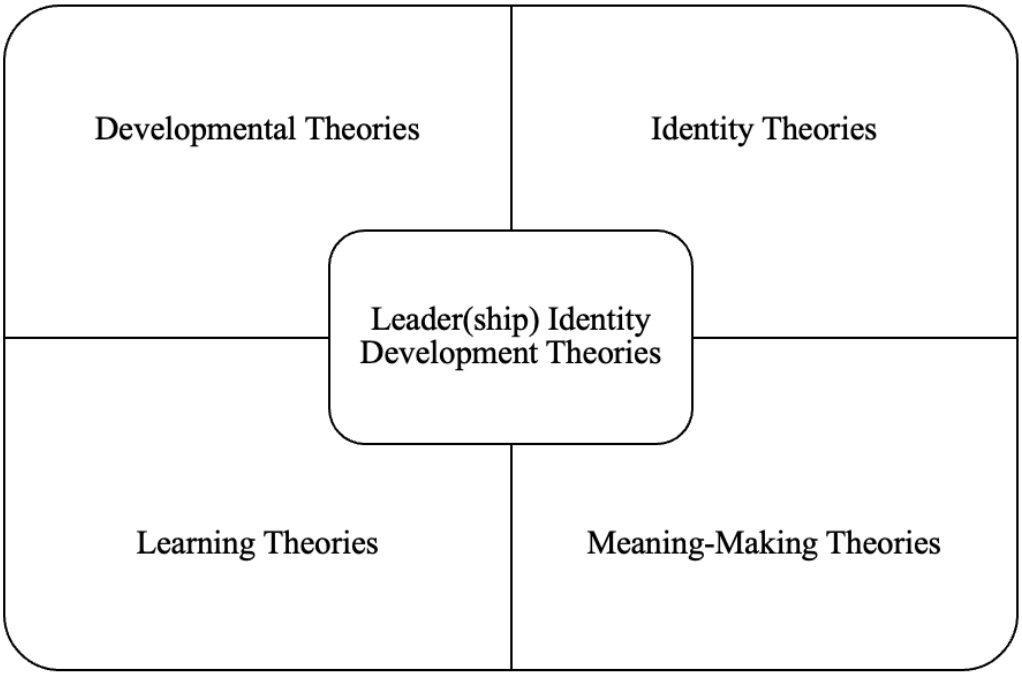
At risk of reductionism and abstractionism, the proposed model, while oversimplified, is intended to emphasize that LID is connected to and dependent on the four core theoretical areas (i.e., development, identity, learning, and meaning-making theories). Theories or models attempting to explicate the LID process while ignoring any of the four core theoretical areas risk ignoring essential underpinnings, limiting the explanatory ability of the theory or model. We encourage future scholars to continue elucidating the complex relationship between LID, development, identity, learning, and meaning-making theories. Scholars of other social identities (e.g., gender) may also benefit from considering the proposed model as they design studies seeking to better understand types and levels of social identity development.

The proposed model has inherent challenges to acceptance and utilization. First, it may be difficult to quantitatively assess LID because LID incorporates numerous dynamic psychological factors, including internal and complex relational and collective processes. Even with qualitative approaches, accounting for the different psychological factors of LID during data collection may be challenging. Further complicating the development of integrated and robust LID theories is the importance of leadership scholars having a foundational understanding of developmental, identity, learning, and meaning making traditions that inform LID. Finally, conducting research at the intersection of LID and meaning making involves numerous theoretical traditions, which may make the acceptance of manuscripts in a heavily siloed scientific community challenging. Despite the potential difficulties of utilizing the proposed model, leadership scholars are encouraged to contextualize leader(ship) identity work using the proposed model to better

elucidate the intersection of LID and meaning making. Given that individuals must establish and build a leader identity to be motivated to engage in leadership work (Lord & Hall, 2005), an increased understanding of the leader(ship) identity process will continuously improve the teaching and learning of leadership.

Figure 2

An Integrated Constructivist Model for Leader(ship) Identity Development Theories



Conclusion

In sum, the current scoping review demonstrates that scholars are devoting increased attention to the intersection of LID and meaning making, as indicated by the sharp rise of articles published between 2017-2020. However, despite enhanced scholarly energy, substantial gaps in the field remain, including (a) how, why, and when meaning making opportunities, such as reflection, contribute to LID; (b) examination of if and how LID facilitates change in meaning making capacity; (c) utilization of diverse methodologies to study the intersection of LID and

meaning making; (d) development of quantitative approaches to research LID and meaning making; and (e) exploration of LID and meaning making beyond social constructivist approaches. For researchers who continue to follow the constructivist tradition in studying LID, an integrated constructivist model for leader(ship) identity theories is proposed, urging leadership scholars, as well as leadership practitioners, to incorporate developmental, identity, learning, and meaning-making theories into discussions of LID. However, given the dominance of constructivism in studying LID, we suggest that scholars consider approaching research from alternative epistemological traditions. As alternative traditions are employed, additional integrated models for LID theories may emerge. In sum, advancing understanding of the connection between meaning making and LID will strengthen theory and practice, contributing to enhanced training and development interventions in curricular, co-curricular, community, and organizational settings. Therefore, scholars are implored to explicitly explore and examine meaning making and other integrated theoretical domains as central components of LID research.

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